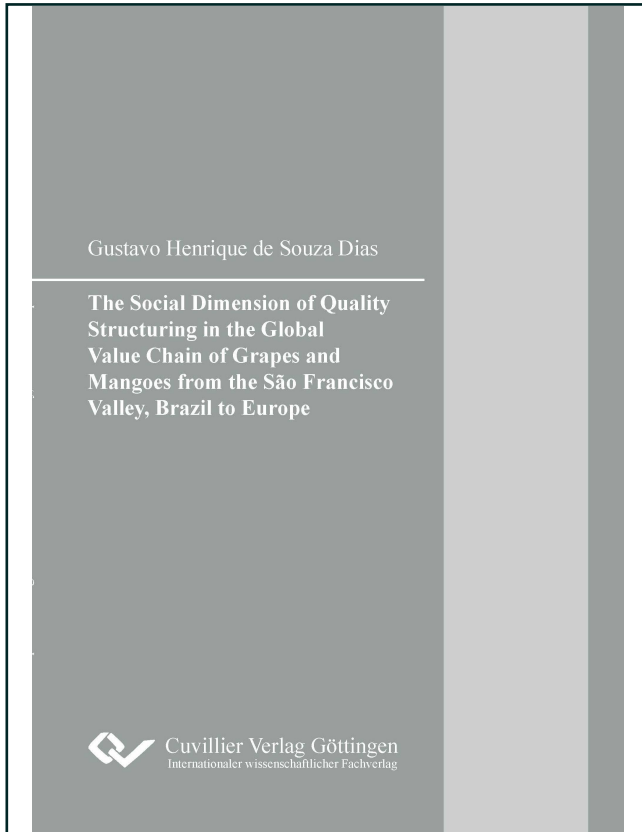




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The Social Dimension of Quality Structuring in the Global Value Chain of Grapes and Mangoes from the São Francisco Valley, Brazil to Europe



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1 Introduction

Initially an agricultural region largely dominated by extensive live-stock ranching besides small-scale riverside agriculture and fishing, the Vale do São Francisco (São Francisco river's valley, henceforth VSF) in the northeast of Brazil has been a focus of developmental policies for over 5 decades (SILVA, 2001: P.72; SELWYN, 2008: p.381). However a significative shift may be observed from the mid 70s on with the expansion of the water supply potential and the phase of hydroelectric-power production with the construction of the Sobradinho dam. At this point, growers enrolled in large scale public irrigation projects have been targeted by a pack of governmental interventions (CAVALCANTI, 1997: P.79; SILVA, 2001: p.74). These involved a set of directed policies on credit and land tenure, agricultural research and extension services, build up of transport, urban and irrigation infrastructure (CAVALCANTI, MOTA AND SILVA, 2003b: p.6). Thus, initially the main transformations translated into shifts in previously practiced productive systems. This took the shape at first of an intensification of the locally produced crops boosted by the constructions of small water channels and the dissemination of "individual equipments" as diesel water-pumps and, later on, electric ones (SILVA, 2001: p.73). Changes in the region were more pronounced after the establishment of the first two public irrigation projects of 'Mandacaru' and 'Bebedouro' in the end of the 60s. These public irrigation perimeters served as pilots for the implementation of further projects based on a series of studies on the adequacy of soils, new crops, property size and management of water supply which identified the twin-city region of Petrolina- Juazeiro as the ideal focus area for state interventions (SOUZA, 2007: P.6; DAMIANI, 1999: p.51-54).

From this point on a mixed group of growers from different regional origins ranging from small to medium scales were increasingly attracted by conditions offered for settlement in the region. These farmers were enrolled on irrigation programs and, so, early productive systems gradually gave way to prospective crops (MARSDEN, CAVALCANTI AND IRMÃO, 1996: p.93-94). This was, furthermore, combined with the promotion of a public selection of larger agricultural firms . These agents, by their turn, were granted temporary concessions of land through a programmatic selection process. This selection involved public appraisal of business projects detailing strategies of production



and marketing including intended investments, types of crops and programmed area for each, types of technology to be employed and planned returns (DAMIANI, 1999: p.88-89). In an initial phase intense efforts were dispensed in promoting linkages with national agricultural processing industries . As observed this strategy was combined with the promotion of tomato production among enrolled settlers (DAMIANI, 1999: P.150; SILVA, 2001: p.87-88). Finally, after this phase the available potential of fruit production for export -so far only tested in experimental stations and amidst successful pioneerswas incorporated to the public irrigation projects. This had been realized by a report establishing a new set of interventions for the region, the 1987 PLANVASF (CAVALCANTI, 1999a: p.138). Up to this point a mix of crops composing the systems of rotation in the public irrigated perimeters provided for a gradual capacity building in irrigated systems. According to this process enrolled settlers were gradually trained in the advanced techniques involved in growing the main perennial crops of the region since the 1990's, that is, mangoes and grapes. The latter were broadly destined from the outset to entrance in the main external consumer markets, USA and Europe (MARSDEN, CAVALCANTI AND IRMÃO, 1996: P. 91-95; DAMIANI, 1999: 164-166).

Problem Description and Objectives

Scholarly literature point out the extent to which, from the second half of the 1980's, the VSF turns into a locus of developmental planning through the governmental agencies active in the region. The productive restructuring undergone by the region boosted with the positive results in exports. The latter, in effect, launched the locality as one of the drivers of northeastern Brazil's GDP rates (CAVALCANTI, 1996: 115). A strongly underlined feature of such transformations is the intimate connection established between observed developmental traits and the links with global markets (CAVALCANTI, 1997: p.79). Thus, migration of individuals of a variety of social backgrounds, levels of instruction and technical capabilities from the most developed southern Brazilian states to the northeastern poorest in search for enrollment as settlers and those flowing in to compose the agricultural labor force demanded were all entangled in a development model shaping regional processes. More specifically this development model was driven by coordinates and priorities accruing simultaneously from local and global determinants (CAVALCANTI, 1999b: p.136-7). In this sense, the signs associated with quality of fruits (CAVALCANTI, 1997), safety of human health and the environment (CAVALCANTI AND MARSDEN, 2001; CAVALCANTI, 2002; DAMIANI, 2003) the rhythms of production and work (CAVALCANTI, 1999B; CAVALCANTI, MOTA AND SILVA, 2003a) were intimately connected with the international networks of production and consumption. Accordingly,

"The production and consumption of quality food creates new inequalities that disadvantage but also empower various groups. The quality fruit production that takes place in the San Francisco Valley is an illustration of this process. But it is also an illustration of the essential meaning of globalization. The links that connect global production affect groups and social relations in ways that were not seen before. Therefore, to understand globalization, the events of the San Francisco Valley's fruit production indicate that one has to pay attention to the complexity of relationships linking processes and agents." (CAVALCANTI, 2004: p.35).

Structural change affecting the life and work conditions of farmers groups and more broadly the inhabitants of rural producing regions in the southern hemisphere are increasingly connected with encompassing transformations in different fields being undertaken in the local and global levels (MCMICHAEL, 1994). Analytical effort is in need in order to tackle the ways by which the grounding notions of acknowledged expertise, credentials, productive and business priorities come to be and lend consistency to the coordination structure of such networks in the interplay between internal and external determinants.

With the globalization of markets commercial relations based in the geographical proximity between actors are overlapped by the establishment of international chains of goods. In this process global productive chains offer a number of challenges to economic, environmental and social sustainability. According to core arguments of New Institutional Economics grounded on the notion of transaction costs (WILLIAMSON, 1998), the issue of opportunistic hazards assailing contractual arrangements is a central problem for the reproduction of markets. This is particularly pronounced when considering markets revolving around products of highly specific quality content. According to the concept of transaction costs, 'asset specificities' related to production processes, products' and markets' characteristics and quality attributes provide parties in a transaction with asymmetrical access to information. This setup, in the lack of clear coordinative solutions, generates the condition in which better positioned parties are able to take advantage of incomplete contractual mechanisms (GEREFFI et al., 2005: p.80). This context is particularly relevant for the case of markets of specific-quality products as that of Fresh Food and Vegetables (FFV). These, in contrast to the reality of chains of agricultural commodities, are based on established perceptions of quality regarding FFVs' attributed intrinsic features as well as those related to their production processes (DOLAN AND HUMPHREY, 2000, 2004; BELIK, 2005; FLEXOR, 2005).

It is debated (HUMPHREY AND SCHMITZ, 2001) that access to main international consumer markets in developed countries is increasingly dependent on the capacity to participate in the global production networks of central chain participants or 'lead play-

ers'. Following, this fact highlights the current importance of engendering mechanisms which allow a "shared knowledge of the prices and the characteristics of the goods" informing the institutionalized boundaries of a given trade (SIMON, 2000 quoted in HUMPHREY AND SCHMITZ, 2001: p.3). This draws attention, in other words, to how social actors develop the skills allowing them to adapt to encompassing processes and changes in technical parameters establishing settled perspectives in rich consumer countries. These amount to normative determinations on issues such as social, labor, environmental, quality, safety and ethical terrains (NADVI AND WÄLTRING, 2002: p.10).

BUSCH (2000) argues that the institutionalization of quality grades and standards play a major role in the process of international integration of markets. Their establishment lays a common ground for tackling related problems accruing from this set up in terms of mechanisms economizing on trade-related concerns. At the same time they provide multi-faceted solutions not just restricted to the immediate problems of particular industries but also in sector-specific and generic market levels (NADVI AND WÄLTRING, 2002: p.11). Stressing the political significance of these topics, in considering the case of FFV markets CAVALCANTI (1999b) points out that at the one hand these mechanisms promote more equal opportunities of entry in such networks. On the other they simultaneously mean the exclusion of a large number of actors, unable to reach compliance to stricter and highly specific quality demands. At the same time, the author calls attention to the vulnerabilities generated by stringent notions of product quality promoted by strongly positioned business parties (CAVALCANTI, 1999b: p. 129).

These reflections call out attention to such formatting mechanisms instituting the categorization of values and evaluative criteria. In this sense, grades and standards provide for a rigid 'objectification' of social values in that they help determine the place of considerations, measurement and judgments of latent ethical agreements (THÉVENOT, 2009). Test of things are "measures of nature at the same time as they are measures of culture";

"the readings on the meters, dials, and gauges of machines designed to measure facts are known collectively as values. Put differently, we value facts because they show the facticity of values. To update Protagoras, our relations with our world are the measure of all things." (BUSCH AND TANAKA, 1996: 23-4).

These remarks bear down, therefore, on the set of dynamics by which social actors engage in consensus building over elements of varying degrees of legitimacy. In the present work this general context will be considered under a concept of social action based on the notion of 'conventions' as will be explored on the reflections over the

theoretical framework employed (chapter 4). According to this, the sort of normative dynamics mentioned are understood as common to the daily dilemmas experienced by the wide array of professionals composing global chains of products (PONTE AND GIBBON, 2005). Thus, under the perspectives on social action to which this work subscribes, these reflections relate more generally to how global chains of products are ultimately structured, that is, to their governance schemes. In order to address these general connections firstly, a refined comprehension of how coordinative arrangements emerge out of the interconnectedness of relations among chain actors. According to this, the insights used in this study shed light on processes generally perceived as 'quality structuring'. Correspondingly, they focus in the interactive mechanisms through which features, procedures and attributes otherwise deemed singular and contingent are formatted into acknowledged modes of action settling coordinative predicaments.

In this way, this project aims to clarify the process by which social actors involved in northeast Brazil's grapes and mangoes GVC to Europe mobilize strategic arguments allowing them to ground claims over coordinative disputes in legitimate modes of action. This must consider (a) whether the articulated claims are fundamental sector-specific issues or particular to individual firms or agencies; (b) how this process of articulating perceived claims is brought forth and the formatting of its outlines into modes of action gains shape; (c) and whether the promoted pathways for disputes involve compromises with oppositional standpoints orienting involved parties or not. These topics informing the research's guidelines will be further debated in chapter 5 'Methodology and Research Approach'.

At this point it is important to bring additional inputs on the general background informing the demarcation of the study object. The present study is committed to the comprehension of pivotal social processes coming into play in the structuring of the global chain of grapes and mangoes produced for export in Northeast Brazil to European consumer markets. Following this purpose, the investigation demands its approach to be located among relevant topics as developed in social sciences' distinct fields engaged in the analysis of agricultural productive systems. The subjects in the subsequent section bring forth general features of social-political contexts framing the globalization of fresh fruit and vegetables (FFV) agrifood systems. The aim is, in view of this general background, to locate the relevance of conducting an investigation through a broad conception of processes leading to quality structuring in FFV global chains.

The two subsequent sections will introduce and develop into the proper theoretical framework guiding the investigation undertaken here. The third chapter, follows up on chapter 2 with the relevant sectoral processes and the study region's introduction. In this sense chapter 3 lays out a glance on relevant topics streaming from the literature of



reference in an attempt to situate main processes underpinning the globalization of FFV markets. The fourth chapter brings the theoretical framework to which research problem, questions and objectives are based on and to which field inquiries are structured.

The fifth chapter develops on the strategies which assisted in defining research design, questions and objectives as well as pertinent issues regarding procedures for data collection and analysis. Therefore, insights informing the methodological and field work strategies of this study will be explored.

Finally, a series of research results understood as contributing to the main focus of this work will be described. The sixth and seventh chapters are dedicated to the description of findings extracted out of collected data illustrating main arguments ensuing from the investigation. The final chapter shall bring a summary of findings and lead conclusive remarks resulting from data analysis. The conclusive debate will follow by offering a summary of this work's structure and objectives in order to reach an understanding of its relevance and achievements for the study field.

2 Conjectural Dynamics of Brazilian Exports of Grapes and Mangoes

Early registers of planned undertakings from the national government in the regions covered by the São Francisco river basin were composed by the contracting of expert assessments on the river's potential for navigation. The area of interest comprehends 5 Brazilian states in the river's 2.700km extension from Minas Gerais until the Atlantic Ocean. These mentioned assessments were hired by the then Brazilian emperor Dom Pedro II in the years 1852 and 1855. These studies were carried out respectively by the French engineer Emmanuel Liais which produced a report titled 'Hydrographie du Haut San-Francisco et du Rio das Velhas' and the German engineer Henrique Guilherme Fernando Halfeld (Heinrich Wilhelm Ferdinand Halfeld) responsible for the document 'Atlas e Relatório do Rio de São Francisco desde a Cachoeira de Pirapora até ao Oceano Atlântico' (CODEVASF, 2012a). Almost 100 years later similar interests on the river's potential for navigation -and therefore that of it as a connection to the Brazilian southern regions took place. These strategic interests were stressed given the incomplete state of main highways and roads in the region by that time. Furthermore reflections on the area were further aroused by military concerns due incidents with German submarines in national waters at the southern Atlantic coast during the second world war. This was still combined with the river's potential as a possible source for the generation of electric power and governmental concerns since early 1900's with periodical droughts in the northeastern semi-arid zones . The latter, in effect, resulted in the formation in 1909 of the "Inspectory of Works Against the Drought (Inspetoria de Obras Contra as Secas, IOCS) later transformed in the Federal Inspetory of Works Against the Drought (Inspetoria Federal de Obras Contra as Secas, IFOCS) in 1919, and finally since 1945 into the present National Department of Works Against the Drought (Departamento Nacional de Obras Contra as Secas, DNOCS)" (DAMIANI, 1999: p.41).



Figure 2.1: Location of the Irrigated Fruit Production Region in the Vale do São Francisco Region

Source: Adapted from SILVA (2001: p.2)

Early governmental interventions in the river had concentrated in drought mitigation policies through the implementation of "small infrastructure projects" and "emergency programs". However, the 1946 national constitution established the federal government's commitment to developmental programs for the region in the next 20 years and their preceding studies which should inform new programs and policies (DAMIANI, 1999: p.41-2). Out of this context two key governmental agencies for public investments in the regions comprehended by the 640.000km² São Francisco river basin (DAMIANI, 1999: p.43; SILVA, 2001: p.72) were formed: (1) the São Francisco's Hydroelectric Company (Companhia Hidro-Elétrica do São Francisco, CHESF) in 1945 concerned

with construction and management of hydroelectric power-plants and electricity distribution in the Brazilian northeast; and (2) the São Francisco Valley Commission (Comissão do Vale do São Francisco, CVSF) in 1948, transformed in the Superintendency for the São Francisco River Valley (Superintendência do Vale do São Francisco, SUVALE) in 1967 and finally the Company for the Development of the São Francisco and Parnaíba Valleys (Companhia de Desenvolvimento dos Vales do São Francisco e do Parnaíba, CODEVASF) in 1974 linked to the Ministry of National Integration (CODEVASF, 2012b).

Table 2.1: Public Irrigated Perimeters Under Production of the Lower-middle Section of the São Francisco River

Perimeter (year of foundation)	Irrigated area ha	Irrigated area - Settlers (n.farms)	Irrigated area - Firms (n.farms)	Direct Job creation	Indirect Job creation	Main Crops
PETROLINA (PE)						
Bebedouro (1968)	2.432,5 (540,5 ha Embrapa's experimental station)	1.034 (141)	858 (6)	1.200	1.700	mangoes, grapes, water melon, corn, guava e beans
Senador Nilo Coelho (1984)	18.858	12.520 (2.045)	6.043 (172)	19.200	28.800	mangoes, grapes, banana, coconuts, acerola and guava
JUAZEIRO (BA)						
Curaçá (1980)	4.345	1.959 (266)	2.386 (22)	4.000	6.000	mangoes, grapes, passion fruits, coconuts and water melon
Mandacaru (1971)	419	368 (?)	51 (?)	520	780	mangoes, melon, onions, papayas and bananas
Maniçoba (1980)	5.006	1.889 (241)	3.117 (80)	4.000	6.000	mangoes, grapes, passion fruits, coconuts and water melon
Tourão (1979)	13.662	211 (?)	13.451 (?)	1.790	1.160	sugar-cane (92%)
TOTAL	44.722,5	17.981 (aprox. 2.693)	25.906 (aprox. 280)	30710	44440	

Source: Own elaboration out of data published at Codevasf's Website

The modern fresh fruit productive region of the VSF in northeast Brazil can be regarded as the outcome of governmental intervention through direct supervision of Codevasf (DAMIANI, 1999; CAVALCANTI, 2002; CAVALCANTI et al. 2003b) following the first two pilot irrigated perimeters of Mandacaru and Bebedouro still during Suvale's period. Codevasf is an entity mainly dedicated to the promotion of agricultural and

industrial development in the region. Planning and implementation of projects under the scope of this agency are carried through by means of a technology-intensive pack of investments. This outline is in line, according to CAVALCANTI (2002), with the public policy model of "conservative modernization", which pressed for the strengthening of an export agribusiness sector. Still, the investments in technology and work, intensive infrastructure for the production of high value-added crops combined with the overall climatic stability of the northeastern dry lands - with considerable low rainfall levels and extensive sunlight availability during the whole year - allowed the region to secure important market windows in central international markets mostly in Europe and USA. These advantages safeguarded by the regional environmental characteristics have contributed to attract international capitals (e.g. HAY, 2011).

Mainly due failures in early export experiences during the 80's such as the difficulties involved in securing market shares on the papaya trade in Europe (LOCKE, 2003), the public development entities encouraged and actively supported the creation of a major producer association. For some (GIULIANI et al. 2005; GOMES, 2004) this proved to be a central feature in regard to the structuring of strategic competencies and the regional productive network. This way, as is argued, this assisted the region in its entry on global export chains of fresh grapes and mangoes, the lead crops of the region to this date. As registered by the literature, the historic of associative experiences in the region was marked by the leading role played by larger producers and firms best integrated to the export markets (SILVA, 2001: p.147). Furthermore, such entrepreneurial profile grew in number in this productive sector with a process of land concentration, that is a gradual downfall or reduction of small growers' participation. This downfall had been precipitated, among other factors, given the intense requirements on productive capabilities implied in implementing export crops systems (CAVALCANTI, 2004: p.32-33). However, the last years have seen intensive mobilization of associative initiatives driven by small and medium size growers presenting sophisticated production capabilities. Increasingly these are now able to cope with the pressure towards production systems facing strict quality demands from the distinct target markets in the northern hemisphere. Thus, presently the flexible or 'dynamic' entrepreneurial model expected from fit producers involve adapting to quality requirements figuring on a range of issues from food safety to environmental and social sustainability. These technical features convert to a new dominium of knowledge by which producers, technicians and governmental agents are assessed and have their competencies duly ranked. Furthermore, as it becomes the quintessential entry barrier of international markets, the set of buyers' specifications and the dominant norms and standards for the international FFV industry convert into the self-defining parameter between 'professionals' and amateurs.

“Quality is a matter of dispute among social actors in the global networks and as such is a source of inequality. The essence of the dispute arises from contents of the product, as defined by regulations. Recently there has been more concern about how to fulfill the expectations of consumers, formalized in the protocols such as EUREPGAP and in USDA rules; these instruments, codes, grades, standards are part of the ‘knowledge’ of how to comply with consumers’/retailers’ expectations. The prevalent idea in the São Francisco Valley is that those standards make it possible to trace all inputs and technological practices used, contributing to the accumulation of a ‘know how’ – how to produce and reach the market in time. As a producer stated: “We have to learn how to produce in the market time”, meaning that you have to produce out of season, out of a supposedly natural ‘timing’, in times of higher demand, i.e. a new notion of time is created, no matter how it will aggravate the conditions for the sustainability of local development or the environment. Processes of subverting seasonality, in advancing or postponing harvest of mangoes is very often used in San Francisco Valley” (CAVALCANTI, 2004: p.32-33).

One of the central trends on the “standards environment for agribusiness” relevant “for the structuring of value chains” as observed by HUMPHREY AND MEMEDOVIC (2006: p.15) is “the increasing importance of collective private standards”. Expressed in the key principles of the European Food Safety Authority - Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 (HUMPHREY, 2008: p.14-5) - the tightening of public, mandatory standards related to food safety and the higher emphasis given to liabilities of food business operators has seen an enhanced participation of corporate retailers in the shaping of regulative instruments. As informs the literature on this topic, the latter took place through direct engagement of these firms in the deployment of different strategies in different institutional environments and political contexts. By direct counseling of public bodies in the setting of technical mandatory parameters for food safety in the case of specific countries (see MARSDEN, 1998). Through the employing of sophisticated quality control systems composing dominant strategies of particular firms on non-price competition – by means of promoting product differentiation and market segmentation through private labels, brands or firms codes of conduct (BUSCH AND BAIN, 2004: p.329-330; DOLAN AND HUMPHREY, 2000: p.150; HUMPHREY AND MEMEDOVIC, 2006: p.19). Or by the formation of broader private consortiums with the final objective of devising stronger sectoral general business-to-business standards directed at “lower the cost of coordination”; “transfer the cost along the supply chain” by enforcing compliance through certification. Such system is based in its promotion of a changed emphasis on safety control from product attributes to process parameters, so, transferring “liabilities arising out of the changing legal framework for food” (5, 2008: p.28).

Moreover, as a result of the latter processes, an even broader effect is pointed out as underlying dynamics in global agrifood systems. According to convention theorists customary terms of transaction agreed upon by rules of practice are what “determine the content and the form of the production and circulation of commodities” (WILKINSON, 1997a: p.317). This means to say, therefore, that the ways by which mechanisms used on the coordination of human interactions are structured should in itself be the aim of academic investigation. More precisely, this is so given the social nature of such mechanisms in the sense that in the last instance they must be grounded on social values acknowledged by situated communities or groups. The study object proposed by BUSCH (2000) on the moral economy of grades and standards are an illustration of possibilities in this line of inquiry.

“although conformity is never complete and always contested, the creation of standards disciplines, reorganizes, and transforms not only the thing that is standardized but all those persons and things that come in contact with it. But all standards are not established in the same ways.”
(...)

“Comparative empirical studies are needed of agrifood standards creation and maintenance, of different systems of standards governance, of resistance to (changes in) particular standards, of changes in standards through time and space, and of the relation between the moral economy of standards and the political economy of regions, nations and even world systems. In short, the study of the moral economy of standards returns us to the set of questions central to the human sciences: Who shall benefit? Who shall lose? How shall one act? What shall one do? What should the balance be between global and local production? How should markets be structured so as to insure equity? Can we develop standards that encourage more sustainable agricultural systems?” (BUSCH, 2000: p.281-282)

The outlines of such questions will serve as starting point for the research questions and analysis developed in this work, that is, the influence of ethical assessments carried out by social actors, firms and organizations on decisive moments and events of their performance in products' chains. Moreover, this study will be concerned with the impact of such level of assessments to the structure of their environment, the network of actors involved in the given products's chain. Also, of interest for the investigation undertook here are the sense and content of this level of decisions and guidelines orienting interactions in business environments and constraining it towards standardization of expectations and practices. Such standardization, or 'conventionalization' as will be argued during the debate of the theoretical framework, is to be grasped either in

a formalized fashion through institutionalization of codes of conduct and performance or loosely through customary habits characterizing work and business environments.

At this point is pertinent to proceed outlining lines of thought offering insights on the international integration of markets insofar as they frame processes experienced by contemporary societies pertinent to the research problem. Thus, in the next section an attempt is made to connect processes of deep effects influencing frameworks of action in contemporary societies' socio-political backgrounds and the constitution of global chains' governance arrangements. This is followed by a short presentation of key themes related to economic activities' problem of coordination and its connection to the general processes framing the definition of notions of quality as well as the constitution of instruments for its measurement and assessment in the wide array of products and services engendered around FFV markets.



3 Historical Background: reflections over perspectives on the globalization of food

In the absence of a consensual definition of the 'globalization' concept, BONANNO (2003) proposes six features regularly put forward by the extensive literature on the subject. According to this (BONANNO, 2003: p.190-1) 'globalization' (a) may be regarded as a historical phenomenon and at the same time an economic, political and social project; (b) refers to global systems of production and consumption in terms of the free mobility of its processes and main players around the world; (c) has transnational companies as central players marking the international political-economic framework due their capacity of 'hypermobility' enabling attainment of 'most convenient political and social conditions'; (d) is a social process insofar as it affects societies by the 'redefinition social and spatial conditions' of social reproduction at the same time pressing for a cultural standardization often triggering the counter effect of strengthened local social relations' cultural idiosyncrasies; (e) is referred to as a deliberate political project of dominant global class of capitalists to counter the broad political-social project of the 'fordist' welfare state; and finally 'globalization' (f) has to be understood as a set of complementary unequal processes promoting simultaneously inclusion and exclusion of regions in the world.

In the attempt to frame a discussion on the transformative effects of globalization movements for contemporary societies, the same author situates (BONANNO, 2007) decisive processes such as market integration and global sourcing in the context of compression of time and space categories. But the extent to which these transformations influence present societies and, more specifically, agricultural productive systems remains an issue of intense debate (WANDERLEY 2000; BENDINI, CAVALCANTI AND FLORES 2006; MCMICHAEL 1994; SCHAEFFER 1997; BUSCH 2000; CAVALCANTI 2006). Therefore distinct emphases are given to the various levels by which economic integration transforms the conditions for countries to participate in it and the capacity of societies to address public demands and promote social change.